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Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure (Madras Amendment) Act, 1960

* 216 *Q.*—SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure (Madras Amendment) Act, 1960, has been brought into force; and

(*b*) if so, the number of prosecutions launched till date?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) No prosecution has so far been launched.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Sir, am I to take it that the Government examined the various periodicals published in our State or the periodicals brought into our State for sale by other States or other places, and that they were satisfied that there was no case for prosecution?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Not at all, Sir. The Commissioner of Police examines the various periodicals that come into the State. He has recommended one or two cases for prosecution, and they are under examination.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Apart from the Commissioner of Police examining the periodicals, may I know whether the Government *suo motu* or the Ministers, who I am told go through all weeklies, have raised any question that a particular case is fit for launching a prosecution?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : I do not know whether any Minister does it or has the time to do it. But whenever it is brought to the notice of the Ministers or the Government by the Information and Publicity Department by putting up cuttings and otherwise, then the matter is examined.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : May I, with your permission, hand over copies of a weekly to the Hon. Minister and ask him to satisfy himself whether the weekly would come within the scope of the Act? Not only the latest, but also the earlier copies I give.

(Sri Mohamed Raza Khan then handed over copies of " Blitz " to the Hon. the Home Minister.)

SRI K. BALASUBRAMANYA AYYAR : Under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code there is also power to seize these pamphlets. Will the Government take any action whenever anything obscene is published?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : The Government are really very much concerned and disturbed over the increase in this type of publications. But this has got to be examined very carefully, because there may be a suspicion that the Government are trying to stifle freedom of expression and freedom of opinion.

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Therefore there is a certain amount of reluctance on the part of the Government in taking immediate action without very close examination.

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Apart from that, Sir, I would submit that we cannot take serious notice of every one of these trash journals. We have to ignore them. We should not give them undue publicity. Unless absolutely necessary, the Government are not advised to take action.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Sir, whenever the Government bring in a Bill and get it passed, we say that it is very easy to pass a Bill and difficult to enforce the provisions thereof. This is an instance. The Government know the difficulties which are there. But they simply got this Act through the legislature. They feel that it is difficult to take any action now.

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : We are getting legislation through this House in order to enable us to take action wherever we feel action is necessary and should be taken.

DR. A. SREENIVASAN : Sir, is it a fact that the vernacular weeklies, especially in our State, are on the border land of vulgarity for the sake of circulation? Will the Government consider the possibility of prosecuting them?

SRI K. BALASUBRAMANYA AYYAR : Why border? They have reached that stage.

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Sir, I want it to go on record that a class of dailies should not be maligned. To say that vernacular dailies are on the border of vulgarity is too sweeping a statement. Some of them may be so. There are dailies and weeklies in any language—English or Tamil or Telugu or Urdu—which are of this character. When Government do want to take action against them, as the Hon. the Home Minister explained, we cannot take action against every trash and small paper of this kind.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : The Hon. the Home Minister is in possession of the photos, which I have handed over. Will he himself see through them and then come to a decision?

MR. CHAIRMAN : The main question is addressed to the Industries Minister. So, the hon. Member cannot put a supplementary question to the Hon. the Home Minister.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Will the Industries Minister jointly with the Home Minister (laughter) examine the photos presented by me and come to a decision whether there is anything objectionable in them and there is a case for launching a prosecution?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Frankly the Industries Minister has no time to see any of these pictures but certainly will examine whether any literature, or publication or periodical falls

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within the purview of the Penal Code. I would also request hon. Members to bring it to the notice of the Government whenever they find that there is violation of the law.

Dr. A. SREENIVASAN : Cannot the Publicity Department give a helping hand to the Ministers in these matters?

The Hon. Sri R. VENKATARAMAN : They do. That is what I said before.

Match factories

* 217 Q.—Sri K. M. RAMASAMY GOUNDER (on behalf of Dr. A. CHIDAMBARANATHAN) : Will the Hon. the Minister for Home be pleased to state—

(a) the number of match factories started in the Lower Bhavani Pilot Project area during 1959–60; and

(b) whether they have been closed and if so, the reasons therefor?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : (a) Nil.

(b) Does not arise.

Firewood

10-40 a.m. * 218 Q.—Sri T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Will the Hon the Minister for Home be pleased to state—

(a) whether any representation has been received from the firewood merchants of Hamilton Bridge in Mylapore, Madras, about the rise in prices of firewood and charcoal; and

(b) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken thereon?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Sri T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Sir, are the Government aware that the price of firewood has risen from Rs. 1–14–0 to Rs. 2–8–0 per gundu after the rains in November, and was it brought to the notice of the Government, though not by the firewood merchants but by others, that on account of the inability of the boatmen to ply boats in the Buckingham Canal the price of firewood has risen to such a high figure?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : The statistics which the Government have with them do confirm what the hon. Member mentions about the rising price of firewood. Certainly merchants from Park Town—not from Hamilton Bridge—made representations. They made the suggestion that the railway authorities should be addressed to provide more wagons and also that the Buckingham Canal should be repaired. All this is being looked into.